Lesson Plan for Moonbird A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95 Sharon Dulabaum

This plan is for a 5th or 6th grade class

This book is about the amazing flight of rufa rednot birds. They fly 18,000miles, from the southern tip of South America to the Canadian Artic.

The lesson plan is to make a time line of the stops the birds make and the activity they perform at each stop.

The first step is to put students into groups of 2-3 students. Have 7 groups, enough to cover each phase of the birds’ journey. Give each student group a map of North and South America.

As a class go through the book and identify the 7 stops the birds make in their migration and have the groups plot their course on their group maps.

The course as follows:

1. Rio Grande Argentina to San Antonio Bay Argentina ( 900 miles)

2. San Antonio Bay Argentia to Lagoa do Peixe, Brazil (1,000 miles.)

3. Lagoa do Peixe Brazil to Delaware Bay U.S. (5,000 miles)

4. Delaware Bay U.S. to Southhampton Island Canada (2,000)

5. Southhampton Island, Canada to Mingan Archipelage Quebec (1,500 miles)

6. Mingan Archipelage, Quebec to Maranhao, Brazil(3,700 miles)

Maranhao, Brazil to Tierra del Fuego Argentina (3,700 miles)

Assign each group on step of the journey.

Each group assignment is to create a poster of their assigned portion of the flight. They must include the time frame, what the birds do to prepare for the flight, problems that may arise and a description of the birds.

For example the first group might include these facts. The birds experience an urge to go because of secretion of hormones. Weeks before they leave they eat tremendous amounts of mussel spat and their bodies convert the food into fat. A gram of fat contains 8 times more energy than a gram of protein. The birds practice the group flights during the winter months. Their stomach and digestive organs expand so that they can take in more fuel.

They stuff themselves up until the last few days before departure and then they eat softer food and less of it. The internal organs not needed during the flight shrink. Liver and gut shrivel as do the leg muscles. Hearts enlarge to pump more blood to his muscles. The birds now look very stuffed and puffed up. The chest and stomach area are full and the flight muscles are bulked up.

On the day they leave hundreds of chattering birds beat their wings and produce shrill calls to rally the birds.

At first they must fly fast to keep aloft, if they fly to slow their wings will fail and they will fall. The fly in a v formation and they change leaders frequently. They face the hazards of strong winds and storms being blown off course.

After each group completes their section of the flight they may present it to the class. When finished the poster may be displayed in a hallway to share with the other classes.